Role of CTRI

4125. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any new role has been outlined for the CTRI in Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is a fact that no new or high quality tobacco has been introduced by the CTRI in the last few years;

(c) whether CTRI has the technical ability to introduce high quality tobacco seedlings suitable for export markets in the country; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed by CTRI in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Institute is concentrating research on different types of tobacco, with emphasis on exportable types on all phases of production management with a view of attaining economic advantage/benefit to the tobacco growers through improvement in quality and quantity of tobacco.

(b) The CTRI has developed six new promising varieties of FCV tobacco during 1993—99 for different agro-ecological zones of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

(c) and (d) The CTRI has the required infrastructure and expertise to cater to the research and development needs of farmers, trade and industry to promote exports by developing superior varieties and agricultural technologies. The CTRI has embarked on many research programmes with the objective of increasing tobacco productivity for major agro-ecological zones of tobacco cultivation. Research Programmes inter-alia include development of superior quality tobacco besides tackling the problems of important biotic and abiotic stresses.

Saffron Production

4126. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Globe's costliest spices saffron is facing a very rough weather in Kashmir,

(b) whether saffron yield has dwindled to merely 10 000 kgs. when about 150,000 are associated with its cultivation and in some areas the production has even dropped by 60 per cent, and

(c) if so, what are Government's plans to increase its production ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO) : (a) The Saffron crop in Kashmir Division has suffered heavy loss due to occurrence of unprecedented drought during the year 1999-2000.

(b) The average yield of Saffron has increased from 2.62 kg. per ha. during 1996 to 3.30 kg. per ha. in 1998. The total production of Saffron in the region was 12,780 kg. during 1998. Kishtwar plateau of Jammu Division has been affected to the extent of 5 to 10 per cent due to corrn rot disease.

(c) Govt. of India is implementing centrally sponsored scheme for development of spices in Jammu and Kashmir under which for increasing production and productivity of Saffron the programmes implemented during the first 3 years of the 9th Plan, are establishment of Seed multiplication plots and demonstration plots. During the remaining period of the 9th Plan, the Saffron development programmes proposed to be implemented are setting up of corrn production centres and establishment of demostration plots to highlight scientific cultivation methods with an outlay of Rs. 10.50 lakhs. Besides, Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir plans to adopt following multi-pronged strategy for revival of saffron industry in Jammu and Kashmir :—

(i) Extensive motivation of farmers for adopting the package of practices for the saffron crop evolved by State Agriculture University.

(ii) Extensive demonstration programme for bringing the non-traditional area under cultivation to cover horizontal expansion to the fullest extent.

(iii) Motivating the saffron growers to replace the diseased corrns by healthy seed stock duly treated with required fungicides.

(iv) Motivation of farmers to go for crop loans wherever financial investment is the constraint. NABARD and local Banks are being approached for providing loans to needy farmers.